be needed. On the countrary these would facilitate quick counting after the polls and also help in checking booth capturing.

(c) The Election Commission in 1991 had recommended to Government the purchase of additional electronic voting machines to cover the entire country.

(d) In May 1993, Government requested the Election Commission to use the available electronic voting machines to the extent feasible in the Assembly elections that were then to be held for Delhi as also in other elections in order to demonstrate the reliability and versatility of the machines.

(e) and (f). Data relating to comparative expenditure are not available. However, it is expected that the use of electronic voting machines would, in the long run, reduce Government expenses on elections.

Value of Rupee

5614. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there was a decline in the value of Indian rupee during the last month of February in comparison to that of the American dollar, Pound, Sterling, Deutsche Mark, Frank and Yen;

(b) whether the rate of export growth was 22.1 per cent in terms of dollar during April, 1995 to January, 1996 whereas the rate of import growth was 30.1 resulting in heavy decrease in the foreign exchange reserves;

(c) whether the average bank loans of Government increased by 11.7 per cent last year; and

(d) if so, the facts thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) The table below shows the monthly average value of the Indian rupee in comparison to the foreign currencies mentioned in the question, during January and February 1996 :

	Rupee per Unit of foreign currency (Average of buying and selling rates)	
	Jan., 1996	Feb., 1996
American dollar	35.738	36.634
Pound Sterling	54.769	56.272
Deutsche Mark	24.514	24.989
Frank	7.133	7.271
Yen	33.910	34.630
(Rupees per 100 Yen)		

The above table shows that value of the Indian rupee declined in February, 1996 in comparison to January, 1996.

(b) There was a decline in foreign exchange reserves during April 95-January, 96 partly in reflection of booyant economic activities resulting in import growth in excess of export growth. Movement in the foreign exchange reserves during any penod broadly reflects all external transactions recorded in the country's Balance of Payment and not only trade transactions. During April 1995 to January 1996, apart from the trade deficit, there was a moderation in capital inflows and higher debt servicing payments, which also contributed to the decline in the foreign exchange reserves of India. Part of the reserve loss was recovered during March, 96.

(c) Net Bank Credit (both of Reserve Bank and other banks) to Government (Centre and State) increased by 9.1 per cent in 1994-95 and 15.7 per cent in 1995-96.

(d) Government is making every effort to reduce expenditure and increase revenue.

Justice to the Farm Labourers

5615. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any efforts are being made by the Government for providing cheaper and prompt justice to the farm labourers and small farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) to (c). Under Section 12(h) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which has been brought into force with effect from 9th November, 1995, every person, including farm labourers and small farmers, who has to file or defend a case shall be entitled to legal services if that person is in receipt of annual income less than Rs. 9,000/- or such other highr amount as may be prescribed by the State Government, if the case is before a court other than the Supreme Court, and less than Rs. 12,000/- or such other higher amount as may be prescribed by the Central Government, if the case is before the Supreme Court.

[English]

Allocation of Coal

5616. SHRI K. PRADHANI : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether allocation of coal is made on linkage and sponsorship basis; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir